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No. CVIII.

## THE MINOR DRAMA.

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# “I DINE WITH MY MOTHER.”

A COMEDIETTA, IN ONE ACT.

ADAPTED BY

CHARLES MC LACHLAN.

WITH CAST OF CHARACTERS, STAGE BUSINESS, COSTUMES,  
RELATIVE POSITIONS, &c., &c.

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AS PERFORMED AT LAURA KEENE'S THEATRE,

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[Catalogue continued on third page of cover.]

THE MINOR DRAMA.

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38

1329

ADAPTED BY

CHARLES Mc LACHLAN.

AS PERFORMED AT

LAURA KEENE'S THEATRE.

TO WHICH ARE ADDED,

A Description of the Costume—Cast of the Characters—Entrances and Exits—  
Relative Positions of the Performers on the Stage, and the whole of the  
Stage Business.

Entered, according to Act of Congress, in the Year One Thousand Eight Hundred and Fifty-Six, by  
CHAS. Mc LACHLAN, in the Clerk's Office of the District Court of the United States, for the Southern  
District of New York.

NEW-YORK:  
SAMUEL FRENCH,  
121 NASSAU-STREET.

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(Cast of the Characters.—‘I DINE WITH MY MOTHER.’)

AS PERFORMED AT

*Laura Keene's Theatre, Dec. 31, 1856.*

<i>Prince D'Hennin</i> .....	Mr. J. A. Smith.
<i>Pierre Didier, (a painter,)</i> .....	Mr. C. Wheatleigh.
<i>The Chevalier</i> .....	Mr. Benson.
<i>Germain, (a servant,)</i> .....	Mr. J. Jackson.
<i>Coachman</i> .....	Mr. Kellogg.
<i>Maitre d'Hotel</i> .....	Mr. Williams.
<i>Sophie Arnould, (Prima Donna Assoluta,)</i> .....	Miss Laura Keene.
<i>Marion, (a Lady's Maid,)</i> .....	Miss C. Jefferson.

*The Scene is laid in Paris, in the Rue Richelieu, at the house of Sophie Arnould. Time, 1st of January.*



STAGE DIRECTIONS.

EXITS AND ENTRANCES.

L. means *First Entrance, Left.* R. *First Entrance, Right.* S. *E. L. Second Entrance, Left.* S. E. R. *Second Entrance, Right.* U. *E. L. Upper Entrance, Left.* U. E. R. *Upper Entrance, Right.* C. *Centre.* L. C. *Left of Centre.* R. C. *Right of Centre.* T. E. L. *Third Entrance, Left.* T. E. R. *Third Entrance, Right.* C. D. *Centre Door.* D. R. *Door Right.* D. L. *Door Left.* U. D. L. *Upper Door, Left.* U. D. R. *Upper Door, Right.*

\* \* \* *The Reader is supposed to be on the Stage, facing the Audience.*

# I DINE WITH MY MOTHER.

---

*The Seene is laid in Paris, in the Rue Riehelieu, at the house of SOPHIE ARNOULD. Time first of January. A boudoir—side doors—at the rear a mantel-piece, with handsome ehimney-glass—rieh and elegant furniture—boxes of sweetmeats, bonbons, bouquets, &c., &c., scattered around on the tables. Before the window, at the R., a toilette glass; mirrors, R. and L. MARION discovered, arranging the articles on the tables.*

*Marion.* Well, well ! what it is to be a popular actress ! Did one ever see such a collection ! Ever since daylight this morning, there has been a continuous procession of lacqueys, with presents for my mistress. First, a shower of diamonds—then a perfect avalanche of bonbons, and a deluge of flowers. [A FOOTMAN appears R., with a bouquet in his hand.] Bravo ! here's another ! the shower has recommenced.

*1st Footman.* Mlle. Sophie Arnould—from Monsieur the Commandant of Choisy.

*Mar.* Very well. [FOOTMAN goes out—MARION places bouquet.] There, that goes by the side of the flowers.

SECOND FOOTMAN appears, R.

*2d Footman.* [With a jewel casket.] From Monsieur the Baron d' Ornay.

*Mar.* Thank you. [FOOTMAN exits—She opens casket.] Oh ! how beautiful ! it isn't a stream, but a perfect river of diamonds. Oh, I could bathe in it with pleasure.

*3d Footman.* [With a box.] From Monsieur the Viscount de Sainte Croix. [Goes out.]

*Mar.* The Viscount ! Why, I thought he was ruined. [Opens box, and makes a little grimaee.] However, I don't think so any longer, that's very certain ; but here comes my mistress.

Enter SOPHIE, L., followed by the CHEVALIER.

*Soph.* Chevalier, you are really a charming man, and this bracelet is of exquisite taste.

*Chev.* Oh ! a mere trifle—it has but this merit, that it is the only one of the kind ; for Bochmer, the jeweller, destroyed the model in my presence.

*Soph.* Really ! then your duchesses will be absolutely furious, for I cannot wear a new bonnet but they rush directly for one like it.

*Chev.* They must go there very often, then.

*Soph.* Well, yes—rather so.

*Chev.* It proves that they have good taste, at any rate.

*Soph.* Yes, it would, if they only adopted my good ideas, but they have no discrimination. Only fancy, now ; the other day Aspasia sent me home this—a perfect abomination. But I was in good humor, and for a whim, I ventured abroad in the monstrosity ; and would you believe it, the very next day there were two hundred “ Sophie Arnoulds !” as they have called them, promenading on the *Coure la Reine* ! I laughed so heartily when I saw them, that I couldn’t sing for a week afterwards. [Laughs merrily.] Oh, these women will be the death of me ! that’s certain. [Seats herself on sofa, laughing heartily.]

*Mar.* [Coming forward.] Will madame dine early to-day ?

*Soph.* What is there for dinner ?

*Mar.* Just what you ordered, madame. Soup a la Reine, fish, poultry, game, early vegetables, side-dishes of various kinds, and a dessert of autumn fruit.

*Soph.* That’s well ; chevalier, you will dine with me to-day ?

*Chev.* Oh, impossible !—to-day I dine with my mother.

*Soph.* [Laughing.] You dine with your mama ? You refuse my snipes, then ?

*Chev.* It grieves me to refuse them—but—

*Soph.* [Giving her hand.] Well, adieu, then, and much happiness attend you. We shall see you at the opera, to-morrow, I suppose ?

*Chev.* You sing there ?

*Soph.* They say so.

*Chev.* Then your question was needless.

*Soph.* Very prettily said. Good bye. [Gives her hand, he kisses it, and retires. When he reaches the door, he sighs.] You wish—

*Chev.* Nothing ! [Sighs again, and exits.]

*Soph.* Ah ! [With an air of ennui, she sinks down on sofa, and places her earrings in her ears, and then calls, turning her head with nonchalance.] Marion !

*Mar.* Madame ?

*Soph.* Has Mons. Didier brought home the picture—you remember—that which used to hang there ?

[Pointing to one side of the mantel-piece.]

*Mar.* No, madame, Mons. Didier has not yet returned it. Indeed, if he had, madame would have known it, for M. Didier is so brusque. Whenever he comes, he enters sans ceremonie,—never even knocks at the door. Ah ! these artists, they are so free and easy, and—

*Soph.* [Interrupting her.] Marion ! Mons. Didier has been my friend from childhood. He made sketches with chalk or charcoal on the walls, when I sang in the streets of Paris. He is to me as my own brother—and I request that you will treat him, and speak of him, always with respect. Do not forget this.

*Mar.* Oh, madame, I am polite and civil to everybody,—yes—even to artists.

*Soph.* [With ironical seriousness.] Indeed ! You are really very considerate ! Even to artists ? We should despise no one, whatever his station in life may be. By the way, Marion, you have a good voice,

your face and figure, too, are not at all bad. Why have you never tried the stage ?

*Mar.* To tell the truth, madame, I have sometimes thought of it, but then I fear I should offend my parents.

*Soph.* [Satirically.] Ah ! yes, very true, it might offend them. Your father is a hack-driver, I believe ; and your mother sells fish—does she not ?

*Mar.* Yes, madame.

*Soph.* I beg pardon, really, I had quite forgotten their positions. Marion ! —

*Mar.* Madame ?

*Soph.* Do you think, Marion, there is, in the world now, a happier person than myself ?

*Mar.* No, indeed, madame, I think not.

*Soph.* It is so delightful, so pleasant, so charming to be an artist,—to possess wit and beauty, youth and talent ! Only think now, of the triumphs—the luxury—the glory of success ! To see at one's feet, the noblest of France—the most illustrious in science, art and literature ! To keep them waiting in ante-chambers. A smile or a sigh from me, makes them happy or miserable. And, when sated with this noble incense, always forced, and seldom sincere, I desire true plaudits ; when I wish to win hearty and honest applause,—I rush to the theatre—advance before the public, who have paid at the doors for the privilege of expressing their opinion ;—then, indeed, my heart beats with hope and fear ; for these are no courtiers, no flatterers : but candid, faithful friends ! When they applaud, then, then indeed I feel the joy and triumph of a victory ! I have pleased them—awakened their sympathies,—they have smiled at my gaiety, and wept at my sorrows ! Ah ! Marion,—sometimes they do applaud me—they do indeed !

*Mar.* They always applaud you, madame.

*Soph.* Then, what more do I require to make me happy ? Nothing ! I am surrounded with every comfort—I live luxuriously ! [Passes to the R.] I have diamonds fit for a queen,—my equipage and horses are the admiration of Paris ! What then do these great and noble ladies possess that I have not, whilst I have that which they do not possess—talent ?

*Mar.* Ah ! but they visit the king.

*Soph.* And when he wants to hear me sing, the king visits me. You see, therefore, Marion, that there is not in the world a woman happier than Sophia Arnould. [Goes toward window.] What beautiful weather ! It is cold, but the air is dry One enjoys life on such a day as this ! What crowds of people in the street.

*Mar.* [Who has also gone up.] You forget, madame, 'tis New Year's day.

[A noise is heard—Murmurs in the street, mingled with peals of laughter on the stairs.

*Soph.* [Sitting on sofa.] What is that noise ?

*Mar.* [As PRINCE enters, c.] Monsieur, the Prince D'Hennin, Madame.

[Exit.

*The PRINCE enters laughing, and throws himself into a fauteuil R. of sofa c. of stage.*

*Soph.* What so amuses your Highness? [He laughs more heartily.] Are you mad?

*Prince.* Pardon me, my dear lady. It is— [Laughs.]

*Soph.* Tell me, I beseech you, the cause of this extraordinary gaiety, and of the noise I heard beneath my window.

*Prince.* It is a present I have brought you, or rather have led to you.

*Soph.* A present?

*Prince.* Even so. Your horses were beginning to look aged, and I desired to replace them with six of the purest full-blooded English horses I could find. They are really magnificent!

*Soph.* But this does not account for your peals of laughter, or the noise that—

*Prince.* Patience, one moment. As there was no room for my present in your stable, I turned your horses loose in the street, and they made good use of their liberty. If you had but seen them prance and caracole! And then to witness the alarm and astonishment of the passers-by—oh! it was too ridiculous! [Laughs.]

*Soph.* [Laughing.] And you have really turned all my horses loose?

*Prince.* Every one of them! And to see the astonishment of the liberated captives! They gazed around with an air of enquiry, as much as to say, "What is the meaning of this?—Out without our harness?—Not even a saddle on our backs!—No carriage behind us?—What crime have we committed?—Why do they thrust us out on an unfeeling world thus?" 'Pon my life, these sensible reflections of the steeds greatly affected me, so I had the six Normands taken back into the stable. The six English are, it is true, a little crowded; but at this moment are perfectly content. From which fact I concluded that our ministers are bad prophets—that the battle of Waterloo is forgotten, and—

*Soph.* France and England are good friends. But how long will their friendship last, think you?

*Prince.* And now, my dear Mdlle., accept at once my best wishes, and my horses. [Kisses her hand.]

*Soph.* Upon my word, you are the true Prince Charming!

[Two servants prepare dinner table and retire.]

*Prince.* What! dinner so early? [Looking at clock.] Well, I must now kiss your fair hand and bid you adieu!

*Soph.* You are mistaken, Prince, you cannot go. I shall keep you to dinner.

*Prince.* Oh! impossible!—quite impossible, I assure you!

*Soph.* Impossible?

*Prince.* It is, upon my honor! I dine with my mother.

*Soph.* Oh! if that's all, you can sit down and write an excuse, and Germain shall carry it.

*Prince.* By no means—in fact, I absolutely must decline.

*Soph.* Why?

*Prince.* New Year's Day—a family fete day. I visit my mother but

seldom, too seldom, indeed, and if I failed to do so to-day, she would think me dead.

*Soph.* But, by writing—

*Prince.* [Rescating himself.] A little note of apology will not suffice in this case. She is a haughty lady of the old school. Every thing around her is modified, while she alone remains unchanged. In her eyes, my brother and myself, are still two children whom she sees but twice in each year—her birth-day and the first of January. Then, a family dinner, in great formality—a silent and solemn festival—during which the silence is broken only by my mother, when she recounts to us the usages of the *Ancien Régime*, and informs us that our father fought with M. de Villars, against the Imperialists. All this, you perceive, is any thing but gay, but then it is a duty I have performed for now thirty years.—Besides, my mother's kisses are rarely bestowed, and I must not miss, perhaps, the last I may ever receive from her lips. Believe me, I am really distressed, but positively I cannot dine with you.

*Soph.* [Tartly.] Cannot! and I have been weak enough to believe you were my firmest friend.

*Prince.* What! not your friend, because I cannot dine with you to-day? But I will dine with you to-morrow,—every day for a month—whenever you wish it—

*Soph.* [Interrupting.] Pray wait 'till I invite you!

*Prince.* [Continues.] I not sincere! I, who have fought six duels for you, and shall fight the seventh to-morrow, with M. de Fontanges, who dared to say yesterday that you sang A flat instead of B sharp, on Monday! If I were not sincerely your friend, I should perhaps be of the same opinion as M. de Fontanges—for, in fact, you did sing one note—I will not say exactly false—but doubtful. I will not assert that it was not B sharp, but it certainly had just a shade of A flat in—just a shade.

[Goes up.]

*Soph.* Oh, very well—very well—join the ranks of my enemies—criticise me. Oh! hiss me, if you like!

*Prince.* Oh, no! By no means! I will fight M. de Fontanges—but I do assert, most decidedly, it was not B sharp. I will, nevertheless, wound M. de Fontanges! I hope I am amiable now? Three o'clock! The deuce!

*Soph.* You go, then?

*Prince.* I must!

*Soph.* Although I *wish* you—beg of you, to remain?

*Prince.* Were you a queen, the wish would be a command.

*Soph.* No words. Will you dine with me? Yes, or no?

*Prince.* [Resolutely.] Well, then—No! I cannot!

*Soph.* Oh! I am weary of that pretended admiration, which consists in bestowing upon me those hours that would otherwise pass heavily—to load me with jewels, which prove not friendship, but only that you are rich and prodigal!

*Prince.* But—

*Soph.* Oh, yes! You are about to tell me again of your duels! Of what import are they to me? Am I happier, because you fight for

me? Is it on my account, even, that you do fight? No, it is from pride in your skill—to prove your coolness and courage! Fine courage, i' faith!—when one has purchased of a fencing-master the power of being brave, with impunity!

*Prince.* [Much moved.] Sophie!

*Soph.* Oh! I'm weary of you nobles.

*Prince.* [With firmness.] Sophie, life has some duties which may appear trifling, but which are really important—aye, even sacred! When my aged mother—trembling on the brink of the grave—expresses a wish that I can gratify, it is my duty to do so; nor shall one act of mine give her a moment's unhappiness! Adieu.

*Soph.* Adieu! [The PRINCE reaches the door.] Remember, however, that I shall not dine alone! I give you warning!

[*Throws herself on a Fauteul.*

*Prince.* And with whom will you dine?

*Soph.* Oh! with the first that comes.

*Prince.* Well, I am content.

[*Going.*

*Soph.* [Aside.] Ah—h! [Aloud.] With the Baron de Marcilly, it may be.

*Prince.* [With jealousy] Marcilly?

*Soph.* [Deliberately] With the Baron de Marcilly.

*Prince* [After an inward struggle.] As you please. [Exit.

*Soph.* [Alone—Rising.] This is too bad.—They are all alike!—these men who fawn at our feet, and swear they adore us! Ah, gentlemen! adore us a little less—and respect us a little more! [Walks about, agitated.] His attentions to me are merely to gratify his vanity. I answer the purpose very well, no doubt. Now, Marcilly lives nearly opposite. I have a great mind to invite him to dine with me. I will! [Rings, and sits down to write.] He is a very nice young man. The Prince will be furious, of course. [SERVANT appears.] Quick, Germain—this letter to its address—quick, quick! [GERMAIN exits.]—[Rises.] He descends to fight for me! Oh! I wish that Fontanges may cut and slash him all over. [Noise without.] There they go—happy wretches! What a stupid day this first of January is. [Goes to window.] Yes, dressed in their Sunday clothes, and chattering like magpies, as they saunter along. My admirers, too, for they are looking at my hotel, with their great stupid eyes, as though it was a menagerie. Ah! well—I suppose they are happy. [Leaves window—SERVANT enters.] Well—a letter?—give it to me. [Reads.] “Your invitation overwhelms me with joy—but, alas! I dine with my mother.”—[She does not finish, but tears letter to pieces, and crumples them in her hands.] It is well. You can go, but don't leave the house. [SERVANT retires hurriedly] This Marcilly is a booby! [Goes to chimney-piece.] Oh, friendship! [Sings.]

Tadelira—It is like love—

Tadelira!

But I begin to feel hungry. I really feel very hungry. I will not dine alone, however! [Sits at table. Enter MARION.] What! is that you, Marion?

*Mar.* Yes, madame. I —

*Soph.* Why, you are quite a belle to-day.

*Mar.* Yes, madame ; I have put on my new dress, because I —

*Soph.* Marion, you are a good girl, and I esteem you very much. Come, sit down ; you shall dine with me.

*Mar.* Oh, madame !

*Soph.* Well !

*Mar.* Madame has forgotten —

*Soph.* What ?

*Mar.* That this morning you gave me permission to go out for four hours.

*Soph.* And when do you wish to go ?

*Mar.* Madame knows well —

*Soph.* No !

*Mar.* I asked leave so that I might dine at home.

*Soph.* Oh ! you have a home too. Well, you can go another day.

*Mar.* Oh, madame !

*Soph.* What is the meaning of this, when I condescend to admit you at my table ?

*Mar.* I feel the honor, madame ; but if you would put it off until to-morrow —

*Soph.* [Sharply.] What do you say ?

*Mar.* I know that it is not your place to wait my convenience, but I did not intend to give offence.

*Soph.* Very well, I accept your excuse. So come and sit down.

*Mar.* Madame, I am sensible of your kindness, but pray listen to me. It is an old custom that we have, to dine at home on new-year's day, and if I failed to do so, it seems to me that I should have no happiness during the year.

*Soph.* And suppose I should refuse to let you go ?

*Mar.* I should be greatly distressed ; but —

*Soph.* Out with it.

*Mar.* I should be forced to —

*Soph.* Well.

*Mar.* To quit your service.

*Soph.* [Rising.] Be it so, then—go !

*Mar.* You discharge me ?

*Soph.* I turn you out of my house. You understand ?—I turn you out ! A girl that I took from charity, and who— You are not gone yet ?

*Mar.* [Supplicatingly.] Madame, believe me —

*Soph.* I must ring for my people. [Goes to the toilette and rings.] Oh, dear ! how my head does ache ! It must be these flowers—these horrible flowers—they should be put somewhere else—in the saloon—the cellar—anywhere !

*Mar.* If—if—madame —

*Soph.* [Ringing all the bells.] How is this ! I have twenty servants, and not one to wait upon me ! There appears to be a conspiracy to-day to kill me. [Goes to R. H.—Several servants enter hurriedly.]

*Ger.* Madame rang ?

*Soph.* Here, throw all these flowers out of the windows ! [They

*obey in a tumult.]* Good ! Now they open the window just to give me a sore throat !

*Mar.* But madame desired it.

*Soph.* [Passing to L.] She desires you to hold your tongue ? Oh ! but I am well served—these lacqueys, who are always sleeping in the antechambers, I turn them out of my service. And you, sir, [to COACHMAN] you drive a coach as though it was a cart, and place my life in jeopardy continually !

[GERMAIN opens windows, L. H.—MARION takes the flowers on a console to the left.—SOPHIE in front of scene to L.—MARION behind sofa—next, GERMAIN, MAITRE D'HOTEL and COACHMAN.

*Coach.* Me, madame ?

*Soph.* Yes, you !—I discharge you. Ah ! you are there ! [To MAITRE D'HOTEL.] What sort sort of a dinner is this you have served up to-day ? You might get a better one at the meanest tavern !

*Maitre.* It is what madame ordered herself—snipes.

*Soph.* Snipes ! yes, it is always snipes ! For six months you have given me nothing to eat but snipes.

*Maitre* [Amazed.] Early vegetables—dessert of autumn fruit.

*Soph.* Certainly—early vegetables in the month of January—why not rubies and fine pearls ? Why, I shall be ruined by such extravagance ! I discharge you, too—there, go—go all of you, and never let me see either of you again ! [Servants exeunt r. in disorder.—SOPHIE walks for some minutes, greatly agitated, and then falls on sofa exhausted.] Oh, dear !—oh, dear ! I am most unhappy !

Enter DIPIER, announcing himself.

*Did.* Mons. Didier, artist, enter. Good-day, Sophie ; I bring back your picture, retouched and restored by the pencil of friendship. [Hangs it over mantelpiece.] Apropos—[takes an orange from his pocket]—one must conform to ancient usages, you know, Mademoiselle. I wish you good fortune and much happiness. It is an absurd enough phrase, but give me at least credit for sincerity. [Places two oranges on table.—SOPHIE replies not.] Why ! how is this—you are weeping !

*Soph.* Me !—Oh, no !

*Did.* But I say me—oh, yes ! Weeping on new year's day ! Why, the matter must be serious !

*Soph.* There is nothing the matter, I assure you.

*Did.* Sophie, you cannot deceive me, for I watch you too closely ; and take so deep an interest in you, that nothing can escape my eye ! Sophie, you remember the old house in that old fashioned street—the little room near the roof—a sort of pigeon-house, nothing more. You recollect the two garret-windows—very narrow and very dilapidated. In one warbled a young girl, to the accompaniment of a harpsichord, discordant and consumptive ; in the other was a full-grown man, amusing himself with a pencil and a worm-eaten easel. The two neighbors became friends—a good, frank friendship—nothing more. Sometimes they were fireless—they did not dine very regularly—they made no presents to each other, and for a very good reason,—but they took counsel of each other. The singer would say to the painter, “ We

are so far from the earth that heaven seems to be too low." Then the painter would say to the singer, "We are so short of coal that the sun seems to be too high." "Ah!" she would reply, "but your heaven is within your reach—you will attain fame and success." "Ah!" would reply the painter, "and your sun is very high, but you will yet bathe in his glory." Since then, the singer has fulfilled the prediction—her glory is complete. While the painter still regards his heaven with a wishful spirit, but is as far from it as ever, she retires to her bed each night, in her luxurious home, to dream of bravos and good fortune. That young girl was thee, Sophie—the painter was myself. The old house still remains unchanged—and shall our friendship alone fall to decay !

*Soph.* [Warmly.] My friend !

*Did.* Then take courage—tell me the cause of your sorrow.

*Soph.* I dare not,—for, in truth, it is very foolish, if not absolutely wicked.

*Did.* Go on—go on !

*Soph.* Well, then, this is it. To-day I have received presents which might excite the envy of a queen.

*Did.* Yes !

*Soph.* All the nobility—the greatest in the land—have left their cards at my door.

*Did.* Of course ! It is the usual homage to beauty and talent !

*Soph.* But not one will dine with me,—not one, Didier—not ever the men who swear that they are ready to sacrifice anything, everything for me !—Not even my waiting-maid !—they all dine with their mother—but, I—I, alas !—have no mother to dine with ! I thought, however, that I had *friends*, at least, if not devoted slaves,—but I was deceived—I knew not that I was the lone thing I am—and the knowledge has made me very miserable !

*Did.* To feel that we have been deceived is painful—very painful, Sophie. Your sufferings prove at least this fact, that you have a heart. Cherish it, for it is rarely found with such persons as surround you !

*Soph.* My good Didier ! [Pointing to table.] I dare not ask you to—

*Did.* I would desire nothing better—but—

*Soph.* Yes, I know !

*Did.* I dine with—

*Soph.* [Smiling sadly.] I know, I know—[rising]—I do not wish to detain you any longer. Adieu, Pierre, adieu ! [Walks up stage.]

*Did.* Believe me, it pains me to leave you all alone on such a day ! [Utters a cry.] I have it, Sophie ! Cheer up, cheer up !

*Soph.* [Anxiously.] What is it, Pierre ?

*Did.* What is it ? I'll tell you. Come and dine with us, and then, at least, you will not dine alone. To be sure, the meal will be a simple one, but you will taste the soup that father Didier loves.

*Soph.* I dine with your parents !

*Did.* To be sure—that is, provided you can put up with humble fare. I can insure you a hearty welcome. Come, now, get ready !

*Soph.* You mean it—you really wish—

*Did.* But you must make your toilette to correspond with the frugality of the feast.

*Soph.* Oh! to leave this place—

*Did.* Ah! but not in that dress!

*Soph.* You don't think I am dressed enough?

*Did.* On the contrary, a little too much! Now I would suggest that you wear one of your maid's dresses, something neat and simple. I shall present you as Mdlle Sophie, a neighbor of mine, a seamstress, earning eighteen cents a day, and I will answer for your reception!

*Soph.* You are right! [Calls MARION and RINGS—Opens door r. h.

*Did.* She is not very attentive, this waiting-maid of yours.

*Soph.* Dear me! I had forgotten that I had discharged her! in fact I believe I discharged almost every body in my house!

*Did.* What! Poor Marion! What had she done?

*Soph.* Because she refused to—

*Did.* Oh, I understand!

*Enter MARION, her eyes red, and carrying a large bandbox.*

*Mar.* It's me, Madame—I come to take my leave of you, since—

*Soph.* Your Mistress retracts the dismissal, Marion.

*Mar.* [Letting box fall.] Oh! Is it true, Madame?

*Soph.* Yes, Marion, I wish you to remain in my service.

*Mar.* Oh! What can I do to show my gratitude! How can I prove—

*Soph.* By lending me one of your dresses, one of the simplest kind.

*Mar.* Oh! the most beautiful one I have, Madame—the most—

*Soph.* No, I wish for the most simple one.

*Mar.* [Opening box.] There they are all at your service

*Soph.* [Selecting one.] That will do, will it not, Didier?

*Did.* It is perhaps a little too rich, but it will do.

*Soph.* Unfasten me, Marion! Didier?

*Did.* Sophie?

*Soph.* Won't you oblige me by taking a book?

*Did.* By all means! [Takes book.] There! [Sits on sofa.]

*Soph.* You won't turn round?

*Did.* Of course not!

[Turns half round.]

*Soph.* Ah!

*Did.* You are right!—There! [Turns his back.]

*Soph.* Don't you look in that glass, Didier.

*Did.* Oh! fear nothing—besides, I am a painter, you know,—therefore it is of no consequence!

*Soph.* Oh, very true! Now read attentively!

[MARION dresses SOPHIE before toilette.]

*Did.* What a delightful thing friendship is, isn't it, Sophie?

*Soph.* Indeed it is, Pierre.

*Did.* For example, now. Here is one of the most beautiful women in Paris, [Turning half round.] for you are one of the most beautiful women in—

*Soph.* Well—well!

*Did.* [Resuming position.] As I was saying—here are two young

people—the one full of confidence and security, the other as tranquil as a nun in a convent. Now, why is this? Because love does not enter into the conference. Friendship is a plain, sensible, honest feeling—but love!—it's all a rhapsody.

*Soph.* There! How do you like me?

*Mar.* Oh! Madame looks very pretty.

*Did.* Perhaps so.

*Soph.* [Coming forward.] Only perhaps?

*Did.* [Rising.] You do look very pretty!

*Soph.* Marion, you can go home. There now, go. [Exit MARION. Now, sir, if you are ready.

*Did.* Upon my word you look very genteel.

*Soph.* The air of a sewing-girl, have I not?

*Did.* You remind me of the old house and the garret.

*Soph.* We walk, do we not?

*Did.* I like a coach better.

*Soph.* But Sophie Arnould might be recognized in a coach?

*Did.* Apropos of Sophie Arnould—I bethink me that I have several more things to say.

*Soph.* Speak!

*Did.* [Gravely.] Sophie, my father is an old stone-mason, simple and unpretending—my mother equally so. They will offer you what they deem to be choice soup; it is for me that it is made. I always send my plate the second time; make no grimaces at it to oblige me. Their language and manners are rude and homely, but I am their child. Some might be disposed to laugh at them, but don't you laugh Sophie, for it would give them pain. You will dine off plates of plain, honest crockery-ware, ornamented with birds and butterflies, but their hearts will be sincere in the cordial welcome they will offer you. So now you are prepared. Now, then, we'll be off.

[SOPHIE takes his arm, reaches the door, and stops.

*Soph.* Didier!

*Did.* Have you forgotten something?

*Soph.* No, Didier. You would take me to your home; it was a good, a kind intention. [Grasping his hand.] Thank you, my friend—thank you! but it cannot be. [Coming forward.]

*Did.* How!—is it your companions that you fear?

*Soph.* No—believe me, no! If I were really the Sophie whom you wish to present to your parents, I would not hesitate one moment. But I am Sophie Arnould, the prima donna, under a fictitious character; and my place is not more with your mother than with the Princess D'Henin!

*Did.* What am I to understand. Sophie?

*Soph.* You know I am worthy to be presented to your honest mother, who, in His sight, ranks as high as the princess. You have proved to me that you, at least, believe, that an actress must not of necessity be abandoned. Would to heaven that the world were equally charitable. Adieu, my friend! my brother, adieu!

*Did.* You desire this?

*Soph.* I do.

*Did.* Sophie, I feel that you have done well ! I thought only of your pleasure—you have thought of my duty. I thank you. Embrace me, my sister. [They embrase ardently.] Farewell ! God bless you, Sophie ! my heart is too full to say more. Farewell ! [Exit.]

*Soph.* Noble and generous youth ! And this poor Maurice, I have treated him badly ; and Marcilly, too—they are all good. [While speaking, she has taken the picture and regards it with emotion.] Yes, they are right—a thousand times right—to be so anxious for the joys of home ! [Addressing the portrait.] My mother !—my dear, good mother !

[She presses the picture to her breast.—As she speaks she approaches the table, and places it on a chair, sitting opposite to it.]

MARION enters hurriedly.

*Mar.* Madame ! madame !

*Soph.* What do you wish, Marion ?

*Mar.* I come to say that I told my mother everything, and she has allowed me to return and dine with you.

*Soph.* Thank you, my good girl ; but I do not wish to deprive you of your little fête.

*Mar.* But I do not wish to leave madame all alone.

*Soph.* [Gayly.] I am no longer alone, Marion. [Pointing to the picture.] You see that I too dine with my mother.

[She takes picture, falls upon her knees, and bends affectionately over it.]

*The Curtain falls slowly to the air of “ Home, Sweet Home.”*

THE END.

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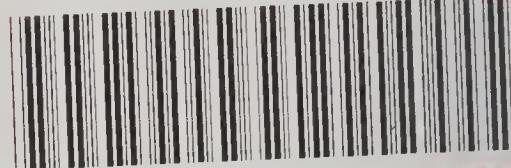








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